



AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION:

On page 22, replace the paragraph on lines 30 - 32 with the following:

5'-

TATGAAAAAAAAGGATCCGTTGTTATCGTCGGCCGTATACTACTAACCGGTGCTTACGCTCG
CAGAC-3' (SEQ ID NO: 27)

On page 23, replace the paragraph on lines 1 - 3 with the following:

5'-

TCGAGTCTGCTGAGCGTAAGCACCGTTCACTACTACGGCCGACGATAACAACGGATCCTTT
TTTTTCA-3' (SEQ ID NO:28)

On page 23, replace the paragraph at line 9 with the following:

5'-CAGCAGACTCGAGGTCTGC-3' (SEQ ID NO:29)

On page 23, replace the paragraph at line 11 with the following:

5'-GCACGAATTACGGGAAACGCATGG-3' (SEQ ID NO:30)

On page 24, replace the paragraph at lines 5 - 8 with the following:

XhoI

Gln Thr Arg Gly *** *** Gly Cys *** *** Thr Ser *** Thr Gly Arg Asp
(SEQ ID NO:31)

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

CAG ACT CGA GGT VAV VAV GGT TGC VAV VAV ACC TCC VAV ACC GGT CGT GAC
(SEQ ID NO:32)

On page 26, replace the paragraph at lines 29 - 32 with the following:

Asn Asn Ser

GlyArgIleIleLeuSerGlyAspThrAlaTyrAlaGlnGlnThr (SEQ ID NO:33)

GGCCGTATCAWCCTGTCCGGTRACACCGCTTACKCTCAGCAGAC (SEQ ID NO:34)

CATAGTWGGACAGGCCAYTGTGGCGATGMGAGTCGTCTGAGCT (SEQ ID NO:35)

On page 27, replace the paragraph at lines 2 - 5 with the following:

Asn	Asn	Ser
GlyArgIleIleLeuSerAspGlyThrAlaTyrAlaGlnGlnThr (SEQ ID NO:36)		
GGCCGTATCAWCCTGTCCRACGGTACCGCTTACKCTCAGCAGAC (SEQ ID NO:37)		
CATAGTWGGACAGGYTGCCATGGCGAATGMGAGTCGTCTGAGCT (SEQ ID NO:38)		

On page 27, replace the paragraph at lines 8 - 11 with the following:

Asn	Ser
GlyArgIleIleLeuSerAspGlyGlyIleThrAlaTyrAlaGlnGlnThr (SEQ ID NO:39)	
GGCCGTATCAWCCTGTCCGACGGTGGTATCACCGCTTACKCTCAGCAGAC (SEQ ID NO:40)	
CATAGTWGGACAGGCTGCCACCATAGTGGCGAATGMGAGTCGTCTGAGCT (SEQ ID NO:41)	

On pages 27 and 28, please replace the paragraph beginning on page 27 at line 26 and ending on page 28, line 3, with the following:

Protease expression levels and solubilities of randomly picked linker variant modified HCV NS4a-NS3 fusion proteases were monitored by SDS-PAGE analysis of the soluble fractions of induced cell lysates (same procedure as outlined in the legend to Figure 4). One linker variant (resulting from incorporation of a variant of the Turn oligo #1) was clearly better than the rest in terms of both protein expression levels and solubility. This linker sequence (...G₄ R₃ I₂ N₁ L₀ S₁ G₂ D₃ T₄ A₅ Y₆ A₇ Q₈ Q₉ T₁₀...)(SEQ ID NO:42) and the resulting modified HCV NS4a-NS3 fusion protease is shown in SEQ ID NO: 14. It incorporates the asparagine mutation within the NS4a segment (numbered -1 in this fusion construct and numbered 30 in the NS4a sequence) and retains the alanine at NS3 position 7.

On pages 29 and 30, replace the paragraphs beginning on page 29 at line 23 and ending on page 30 at line 13 with the following:

Surface Oligo#1 (P86Q) (SEQ ID NO:43):

5'-ACGGGAACCCTGCGGAGCTGCCAACCAACCAGGTCTTG-3'

Surface Oligo#2 (P67P/S; I72Q) (SEQ ID NO:44):

5'-CAACGTTGGTGTACATCTGGGTAACCGGACCTTCGRGGAAGCGATGGTACGGGT-3'

Surface Oligo#3 (A39A/S; A40T) (SEQ ID NO:45):

5'-CCAGGAAGGTCTGGGTAGMGGTGGAAACGATCTAAC-3'

Cys Oligo#1 (C159S/T) (SEQ ID NO:46);

5'-CTTAGAACACCGGGTGGAACAGCACGAGAAGAT-3'

Cys Oligo#2 (C47S/T; C52L/M) (SEQ ID NO:47);

5'-ACCGTGGTAAACGGTCCACAKAACACCGTTGATGGWGGTAGCCAGGAAGGTC-3'

Cys Oligo#3 (A39A/S; A40T; C47S/T; C52L/M) (SEQ ID NO:48);

5'-

ACCGTGGTAAACGGTCCACAKAACACCGTTGATGGWGGTAGCCAGGAAGGTCTGGTAGMG
GTGGAAACGATCTGAAC-3